

# Lost Among The Stars

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Summary: When Major Evan Lorne is attacked on an off-world mission, a series of events is put into motion that reveals the very secret John Sheppard had worked so hard to keep hidden. Eventual Sheppard/Lorne. Spoilers for "Coup d'etat" and "Doppleganger".

## 1. Chapter 1

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**A/N:** Hello everyone! It's so good to be writing again. I started this project as a challenge to myself to write something that I have never attempted before - **/fiction**. It is an interesting experiment for me. I decided that I needed a solid set of characters, but one's that are fluid enough, that I can use to establish a romance. As such, I choose two of my favorite characters from **Stargate: Atlantis** - Colonel John Sheppard and Major Evan Lorne.

**Anyway** I really don't want to give away too much so I'm just going to let you all read it for yourselves. So please, enjoy!

**Characters:** Evan Lorne, John Sheppard, Rodney McKay, Ronon, Teyla, Elizabeth Weir, Sam Carter, Radek Zelenka, Jennifer Keller, and other minor characters and OCs.

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**Warning:** mentions of non-consensual rape.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

Major Evan Lorne took a sip of his drink as he covertly surveilled the darkened banquet hall. The music was nauseating. It pounded hard and fast, encouraging the native performers to dance to and fro in a complicated manner. Every once and awhile the pace would change and the dancers would switch directions, twirling around and around. Their clothing reflected the candlelight, creating a hypnotic swirl of colors and movement. At the far end of the room, away from the dancers, there was a high wooden table that seated the nobility and the honored guests.

The humans of P XK-233 were feudalistic. Their society relied on strict class divisions: Lords, Nobles, Protectors, Tradesmen, and Commoners. From what Lorne had learned during his first visit to the planet, there were five ruling Lords that shared a balance of power over the population. Each Lord had his own land, castle, and supplementary village.

The Nobles swore fidelity to the Lords, acting as advisors and scholars. While most of the nobility had gained their position due to birthright, it was not uncommon for the Lord to elevate a Tradesmen, or even a Protector, to the status of Noble for excellent services rendered unto the Lord. The Protectors and Tradesmen were the equivalent to Earth's own knights and skilled workers, respectively. Each class had enough money and power to avoid manual labor and live a contented existence. But, during times of war, they were called upon to make weapons and defend the Lord's lands.

The Commoners were the biggest class. They worked the fields and supplied food for the upper classes who, in turn, provided protection against roaming tribes, wild beasts, and the Wraith. They were clearly the poorest class, living on outskirts of the villages, furthest from the castle.

When Lorne's team had first visited P XK-233 they were met by a handful of Commoners that were tilling a nearby field. They were curious of the explorers that came through the Ancestral Ring and quickly came over to greet the party of foreigners. Meanwhile, the nearest Protector was summoned to introduce them to the local ruler, Lord Solove.

As per protocol, Lorne left one of his soldiers, Lieutenant Abrams, at the Stargate before continuing on with the rest of his team toward the castle.

Lord Solove greeted the travelers in his throne room. After a brief introduction and explanation for their travels, the Lord happily agreed to negotiate for trade.

"We do not have many traders that come through the Ring," he explained. "Our best ally, the Orogans, was greatly decimated during the last culling. They have, understandably, suspended all trade with us. As such, our medicine stores have become very low and I fear my people may fall to illness."

"I would gladly bring news to our leader," Lorne replied. "Most negotiations will be done through her."

"Her?" Lord Solove questioned.

"Yes, Dr. Elizabeth Weir is the leader of our expedition. Is that a problem?" Lorne narrowed his eyes at the local ruler. It would not have been the first time that he met a patriarchal civilization that resisted female authority.

Lord Solove smiled, "Not at all."

Lorne and his team remained another two hours or so to tour the castle and surrounding lands before heading back to the Stargate. The castle itself was an impressive piece of architecture. It was massive and housed hundreds of large rooms and corridors that provided protection to Nobles and Commoners alike during Wraith attacks.

The entire castle was made of a dark, dense stone. It reminded Lorne of Naquadah, the mineral that the Ancients used to compose the Stargates.

"The stone disrupts life scans," their tour guide told them. "That way we are able to deceive the Wraith of our numbers. They think us to be a small population."

Curious, the Major asked, "What kind of stone is it?"

"It is called Disrutu. We harvest it in the hills."

Lorne nodded, tucking away the information for later.

The travelers were also shown the Protectors' training grounds. It was a wide courtyard lined with crude, wooden targets. On one side of the field several men silently watched a sparring instruction. They all wore similar grey uniforms and guns with long blades. The weapons seemed to most closely resemble a rifle and bayonet used in the late 1700s on Earth. One man barked instructions from the sideline while two Protectors continued to wrestle. The instructor wore a bright red shoulder patch on his uniform, indicating a high rank. The tour guide later introduced him as Baltier, Head Protector.

He easily smiled at the visitors and greeted them warmly. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Major."

"Likewise," the Major drawled. When Lorne shook his hand, he was impressed by the man's strength. Baltier was a large man, almost a head taller than Lorne. His sandy colored hair was sheared close to his skull and he was cleanly shaven. He had broad shoulders and hard muscles. The Major mused that if he didn't know better he would have guessed the Head Protector to be from Sateda.

"I am intrigued by your weapons," Baltier commented, pointing to the P-90 strapped to Lorne's TAC vest. "Would such a firearm be available during any trade negotiations?"

"I'm afraid not," Lorne responded. "On principle, we do not trade weapons with any of our allies. We do, however, offer military training."

The Head Protector grinned. "Personal training is always welcome."

Shortly after, much to Baltier's disappointment, Lorne and his team left to go see the archives and records.

Upon returning to Atlantis, Elizabeth was eager to learn of a new potential trading partner. Lorne recounted what he had witnessed of the society and its population. When asked, the Major conceded that it would be best to offer medicine and possibly military training during negotiations. In return, he told her of the castle's unique stone. While food and textiles were always needed, Lorne explained that if the Disrutu mineral was as good as it sounded it would greatly aid them in the war against the Wraith.

"Agreed," Elizabeth said. "When you return to confirm negotiations, I'll send Dr. McKay with you to test the stone. While we might have little need for it here on Atlantis, it could be very helpful at our Alpha sites."

The next day Lorne's team returned to P XK-233 with Rodney McKay. Luckily, Lord Solove allowed Rodney to run some preliminary tests on the castle while he talked to Lorne about negotiations. The local Lord settle on a period of three days were he, and two more local rulers, could meet with Elizabeth. With the promise of peaceful negotiations, and Rodney's report that the Disrutu stone did indeed block out life sign detection, Lorne returned to Atlantis with good news.

Several days later Elizabeth accompanied Lorne's team through the Stargate to begin negotiations. Colonel John Sheppard's team also came along for added protection. The group was given quarters and food before the first meetings began. Elizabeth and Teyla Emmagen were given a large, ornate bedroom near the throne room while the men were housed on the other side the castle in less hospitable quarters. Originally John was displeased with the placement, fearful for Elizabeth's safety. But Ronon Dex quickly calmed him down, stating that Teyla was a formidable opponent to any possible assassin.

The following day Elizabeth led the negotiations. Teyla, John, and Rodney stayed with her, acting as advisors. Meanwhile, Lorne and Ronon spent much of their time with the Protectors. Ronon gladly gave fighting demonstrations while Lorne aided others to fix their shooting style. The Head Protector seemed particularly interested in the Major's skill. Baltier often complemented Lorne on his style and requested for private lessons after meal times. Lorne agreed, for the sake of the negotiations.

The meetings were slow but successful.

The local Lords' desperation for medicine overpowered their reluctance to trade the amount Disrutu stone that Rodney requested. In the end, it was Baltier who convinced Lord Solove and the others that the military training alone would be a great asset to their people.

And so, on the third and final night of negotiations, Lord Solove prepared a feast to solidify the formation of their newest alliance.

The Lords had requested that no weapons be allowed in the great banquet hall, to show trust between their two peoples. As such, for safety's sake, Lorne was placed on sentry duty for the festivities

while the others took their seats at the high table as guests of honor.

The Major lazily scanned the crowded room. He saw Lieutenant Abrams stationed at the main entrance at the far end of the hall. He didn't see Ronon, but he assumed the Satedan was just doing another walk through of the castle's hallways. When he'd finished his scan of the room, Lorne's eyes automatically sought out his commanding officer.

"\_How's everything?\_" asked John over the earpiece Lorne wore. The question was hardly audible over the music.

"All's quiet," Lorne reported. He winced as the song changed tempo again. "Well, as quiet as it can be."

"\_Headache, Major?\_"

"Nothing I can't handle," he drawled.

Lorne took another sip of his drink. The native beverage was a deep red and tasted of cherries. It was the only non-alcoholic drink offered at the feast, and since Lorne was technically on duty he could not partake in the wine.

"You look lonely. Want some company?"

It took a moment for Lorne to realize the comment had been directed at him "€" but when he finally did, he turned around and found Baltier casually leaning against a nearby table.

"How could I refuse?" the Major replied, giving him one of his very best smiles. The two soldiers had become fairly friendly over the past three days. Lorne shifted his sentry position slightly so he could easily keep track of the festivities while appearing to give the man all of his attention. "How are you, Baltier?"

"Very well, thank you," the Head Protector responded. "Did you enjoy your Luptis?" the man asked, gesturing to the empty cup in Lorne's hand.

The Major guessed that Luptis was the name of the native drink.

"Yes," Lorne confessed, "it was very good."

"Allow me to refill your glass."

Nodding, Lorne passed him the cup before making another sweep of the room. Turning back he was greeted with a freshly filled glass. Baltier grinned as Lorne immediately took a sip of Luptis before changing their conversation to defensive strategies against the Wraith.

"\_All positions, check in\_" John ordered via the earpiece several minutes later.

The Major found it strangely difficult to focus on Baltier, the dancers and guests, and all the different responses from the team. As such, Lorne ignored his commanding officer and kept his waning focus on Baltier.

"\_Lorne, you there?\_" questioned John. "\_Anyone got eyes on him?\_"

"\_Yes, he is fine\_," Teyla announced. "\_He is busy talking to the Head Protector.\_"

"\_Who?\_" Rodney's voice entered the conversation.

John's voice came through the earpiece again. "\_You know, the guy that couldn't stop singing praise about Lorne's military training.\_"

"\_You sure he wasn't talking about Ronon?\_" came the scientist's nasally response.

"\_McKay, you know Ronon isn't the only trained officer on this mission, right?\_"

"\_Whatever.\_"

Taking a sip from his drink, Lorne blinked slowly trying to follow the banter between the scientist and soldier. A quick glance towards the dancers caused a small burst of panic in his chest when he didn't immediately spot Lieutenant Abrams that was supposed to be positioned across from him. After a moment or two Lorne finally spotted Abrams standing next to Elizabeth and the others. He seemed to be talking to John about something. A wave of relief flooded his body, but it was short-lived when Baltier roughly tapped his shoulder.

"Are you even listening to me?" the man inquired crossly.

"Huh? Sure, of course I am."

"So what do you think?"

"About what?" Lorne asked dumbly, trying to concentrate on the here and now. He suddenly felt very lethargic. Shaking his head, the Major tried to correct his swimming vision. In an effort to compose himself, Lorne gulped down the rest of his drink and stepped away from the table. He intended to do a quick circuit of the dance floor before checking in with John. Instead, he staggered backwards and bowled into Baltier.

"Major, are you okay?"

"S'rry," Lorne replied, stunned to hear the slur in his own voice.

He attempted to move forward but once again found it exceedingly difficult to focus. His mind seemed sluggish and lazy. He didn't have anything alcoholic to drink " so then why did Lorne feel like he had seriously overindulged?

"Major?"

It again took a moment for Lorne to realize the question was directed at him. And, when he turned to look at the male inquirer, he staggered sideways drunkenly.

"Whoa! Careful," Baltier said as he reached out and slipped his arms

around Lorne's waist to steady him. "I think you've had a bit too much to drink."

"Dn't ha w-wine," Lorne indignantly slurred.

Now there was fear blossoming in his chest, but it seemed strangely dull and removed, as if it belonged to someone else. In fact, everything was starting to look hazy and unreal. The slurred speech, the balance impairment, the inability to focus clearly, and the dulling of emotions all fit the symptoms of someone drugged.

"Leggo," he muttered, weakly trying to push the sandy-haired man off him. He needed to get to his radio. He had to talk to John.

"What? Are you saying you don't like me anymore? You seemed interested enough earlier."

As one of Baltier's hands left his waist and caressed the side of his face, Lorne realized he had greatly misjudged the man's friendliness and his intentions.

"How about we go somewhere quiet, huh? I know just the place," the man stated, letting go of the Major's face to grab his right wrist. Then, keeping one arm firmly clasped around his waist, Baltier flung Lorne's arm over his shoulder.

The sudden realization that this man was forcing him to leave the banquet hall hit Lorne like a ton of bricks. Baltier was not just some gentile soldier. He had drugged Lorne and was taking him God knows where to do God knows what. Despite this realization, Lorne couldn't find the power to struggle against the Head Protector. He simply staggered alongside him toward a side exit.

Baltier smelled a little like John, Lorne decided. Coffee and peppermint, that's what it was; his commanding officer always had a hint of peppermint about him. It was silly really, but Lorne always liked the way John smelled. Pathetically, it was one of the many reasons he had a crush on the Colonel. Yes, he would admit that John Sheppard was incredibly good looking but that was just the surface. Few people were able to see the Colonel's humor and his intelligence. John always played into people's expectations, allowing them to underestimate him before once again saving the day. The Colonel earned Lorne's fierce loyalty. That and his love, though he would never admit it out loud.

Slowly Lorne's mind drifted away from his commanding officer. The implications of his current situation finally penetrated through the fog that clouded his mind. Fear jolted his very being and ran down his spine. It was real - all too real. This realization was slowly followed by the awareness that the Head Protector was still leading him to one of the hall's many side entrances. His kidnapper easily repelled Lorne's weak attempts to pull away from him with pathetic ease. And, as Baltier tightened the hold on his right wrist, it became horrifyingly apparent to Lorne that the man had effectively cut off all access to his headset, the one thing that could alert the team to his apparent plight.

"Let me go," Lorne tried to say, but it came out as an unintelligible mumble.

"Come on, Major, are you really saying you don't want me? I'll make it worth your while, I promise."

No, that was wrong, just wrong. He was wrong - wrong for him. Wrong. He was wrong. He didn't - he wasn'tâ€¦

A sudden blast of cold air hit his face, shocking Lorne enough to arouse him to look up. Somehow they had already left the hot and crowded banquet hall.

And, just as they reached the native guard stationed outside the exit, Lorne realized that he didn't need to rely on his own team to help him. He could act for himself. So, with all the strength he could muster, the Major pushed away from his kidnapper. He thought that if he could get free of Baltier's iron grip and alerted someone to his plight then the sandy-haired man would cut his losses and run away and he wouldn't try anything. Unfortunately, it turned out the drugs were just too strong and he was just too weak. The best he could do was cause the pair of them to stumble sideways. With another burst of adrenaline, Lorne tried to frantically ask the guard for help, but it came out as a feeble slur.

The Head Protector gripped him tighter, shifting more of Lorne's weight onto his shoulders. "Sorry," Baltier smiled apologetically toward the guard, "it seems these traders just can't hold their wine."

The guard gave his superior a sympathetic look before frowning and sending a disgusted sneer at Lorne. "Of course, sir."

After stepping around the guard and into the cool air, Lorne's mind cleared some more and he soberly glanced back in the direction of his team. He could see them through the open door. They were laughing and joyfully drinking with their hosts. Panic and fear coiled in Lorne's gut when no one came to his aid, or even looked in his general direction, before the door fully closed behind them.

"\_How's the party?\_" Ronon's voice questioned over his earpiece.

Startled by the voice, the Major remembered the microphone still in his ear. Regrettably, his wrist was still currently trapped in the kidnapper's hand. But the sandy-haired man would have to release it sooner or later; then Lorne would be able to call for help. Hopefully by then John or Elizabeth would realize he hadn't checked in for a while.

"\_It's exhausting," \_Rodney complained.\_ "They tried to serve me some sort of lemon pie. I mean, are they trying to kill me?! You know I am seriously allergic to citrus. And it's so hot in here! I'm practically melting. Do you think we can leave soon? All this dancing and loud music is giving me a migraine. I'm tired, that lumpy bed they gave me hurts my back and I haven't slept in days. And when I don't sleep I get-\_"

"\_Rodney, please leave this channel open for serious concerns,\_" John drawled.

"Careful," Baltier cautioned as they stumbled around the corner of



the corridor.

"Where," Lorne began slowly, trying to pronounce each sound in an intelligible manner, "going?"

"You're different from the others," the Head Protector replied with a sickly sweet smile.

It took Lorne a few seconds to realize that he hadn't actually answered his question. The drugged Major was starting to feel even weaker and his coordination was rapidly deteriorating. As they stumbled down the hallway he realized that if they didn't reach their destination soon his kidnapper would have to drag him to it.

The man shifted his grip again to grab hold of a belt loop near the Major's buckle. The sudden intimate position of the stranger's hand sent another spike of fear down Lorne's spine. It was then that he recalled exactly why he wanted to get away.

Assault. Rape.

His mind was still fuzzy and the knowledge of what would transpire if he didn't get away seemed to be a far off, unreal nightmare. Luckily Baltier had yet to discover and remove his earpiece.

By now Lorne's headset went silent again. The Major couldn't help but wonder when John would demand the next check-in. In the mean-time, even if Teyla and Ronon noticed he'd vanished from his assigned spot, they would merely assume he was checking on something or making another round, just as he had planned to do before he was drugged and dragged away by his would-be rapist.

As they reached a locked doorway Baltier eased Lorne toward the wall so he could support himself. The Head Protector then fished around in his pockets before producing a pair keys. The Major's vision kept fading in and out. He couldn't focus on where they were heading. Then it suddenly occurred to him that his hands were free and he had access to the microphone in his ear. But, before he could try anything, the wooden door unlocked with a click.

Baltier then turned back towards him. Lorne expected that Baltier would try to maneuver him into the darkened doorway. So, gathering what little strength he had left, he pushed away from the wall. Instead, his kidnapper stepped close to him and the sudden momentum carried Lorne straight into Baltier's chest. Their bodies met, curves matching curves, flushed together for a brief moment before Lorne bounced back against the stone behind him. Another surge of dread rushed through the Major as he realized he was completely trapped. But the dread quickly morphed into disgust as the man stepped even closer and, for the second time that night, cupped the side of Lorne's face with his hands.

The Head Protector's eyes lustfully searched the face before him. "You really are different from the others. You don't think you deserve it," he said, "just because of who you are." The man leaned in even closer and affectionately patted Lorne's cheek. "But don't worry, you'll like this."

Baltier's lips covered his before he could protest. Too weak to turn his face away, Lorne closed his eyes and tried to ignore the

passionate kiss. The drugged Major's thoughts quickly went out to the Colonel who had stolen his heart. John, poor John. What would he think of him?

Suddenly Lorne's legs gave out from underneath him. His kidnapper quickly pulled back from their kiss in order to catch the incapacitated soldier before he fell to the floor.

"Oops, I've got you, don't worry," he soothed. "It's probably best if we wait until we're alone before we start anything. We don't want to be interrupted, now do we?"

Two arms surrounded Lorne's torso and hoisted him up before awkwardly dumping him inside the newly opened corridor. As Baltier leaned over him, Lorne caught another whiff of his scent. Coffee and peppermint. The familiarity of the smell made him sick to his stomach. Coffee and peppermint. A sudden clash of images and emotions â€" love, fear, joy, horror, contentment, violation, John, him â€" flowed over him. Coffee and peppermint. Lorne's head spun dizzily as he clamored frantically, and in vain, away from the musky smell.

He had to get out!

This one thought finally managed to reach Lorne through his drugged mind. Out, he had to get out. Now! Before... before it happened. Lorne shuddered at the thought.

There was no way he would be able to run away in his incapacitated state. Therefore, he would have to rely on the team to rescue him. Thinking of a new strategy, he put all of his strength into moving his right arm. The Head Protector seemed to have temporarily vanished and Lorne knew he wouldn't get another chance to call for help without him noticing.

So he willed himself turn on the microphone attached to his ear.

But that was easier said than done, apparently. After several moments his arm finally responded to his frantic attempts to move it. It flopped uncontrollably towards his face where it smacked itself painfully against the stone wall. The pain helped, clearing the haze a little. Lorne tilted his head towards his fingers and clicked the earpiece on.

But what was he supposed to say?

"H-h 'elp," Lorne slurred.

"\_What was that?\_" the Colonel's voice commanded over the headset.  
"\_Who spoke?\_"

Gritting his teeth in determination, the Major tried to speak again but in a more understandable manner. "Help," he weakly called again.

"\_Lorne? Is that you?\_" Teyla questioned, confusion lacing her voice.

"\_Lorne, what's wrong?\_" Elizabeth inquired.

"Drug- ed."

"\_Drugs? Where?\_" Rodney butted in.

"\_Shit, no! That's not what he means\_, " John exclaimed. "\_Lorne, are you alright? Does anyone have eyes on him?\_"

The sound of more voices quickly filled his ear. Lorne felt some relief despite the fearful chorus of negative replies that answered his commanding officer's inquiry. Elizabeth was also talking again, frantically trying to reach him.

"\_Lorne, have you been drugged?\_" Elizabeth asked.

"Yeah," Lorne replied just as the sound of footsteps approached him. "Hall."

"\_What? What was that last one?\_" Rodney pressed.

"\_Fuck!\_" the Colonel swore. "\_He's not at the banquet anymore. I'm not detecting any music from his headset.\_"

Then, suddenly, his would-be rapist was back, kneeling down next to him. And before Lorne could even react, he already was being picked up and dragged away.

"Let's get out of here, Major," Baltier cooed.

"H- hall," Lorne managed again, the last part getting partially stuck in his dry throat. He tried to moisten his lips but his body didn't want to respond to his brain.

"\_Did you just say 'hall'?\_" Ronon demanded, sharply. "\_Where?\_"

"Yes, we're in a hall," said Baltier with a smile. "But don't worry, it's not too far. We'll be there soon." He reached over and briefly squeezed Lorne's ass before continuing down the dark corridor.

"\_Sheppard? What's the situation?\_" Elizabeth ordered.

"\_Rodney has enhanced the audio from Lorne's microphone and we're definitely picking up another man's voice\_, " John replied.

Relief and fear overpowered the revulsion the kidnapper's touch had produced. His team was now aware of his situation, which was a good thing because his right arm had been knocked away when they started walking again. Dread was added to Lorne's mix of emotions. His teammates had only just started to search for him and Baltier had said that wherever they were going wasn't far away. Would they find him in time?

"\_Lorne, are you still there?\_" Teyla asked.

"\_His headset is still open\_, " Rodney replied after a moment of silence. "\_I don't think it's been discovered.\_"

"\_Okay, well, Lorne, if you can hear me, we're coming, you hear?\_" John promised. "\_Just hold on!\_"

Lorne's head haphazardly rolled from side to side with each turn they took. The Major began feeling worse and worse. He felt nauseous as the vertigo began to kick in. Everything blurred before his eyes. His tongue also felt thick and heavy in his mouth, like a dried up lump of flesh.

In a way, it reminded him of the time he was kidnapped by the Genii. Chief Cowen had drugged him and stuck him with needles to drain him of his precious ATA gene. The Genii scientists had not been kind, electing to deny him and his fellow captives food and water. Back then, when he was drugged and dehydrated, things had slowed and spun like a bad carnival ride. His head throbbed and felt like it was going to split in two. The darkness was closing in on him, threatening to sweep him under into a nothingness from which he wasn't sure he would ever he had to; he had to make sure that his men were okay, that Cowen hadn't hurt had to make sure he hadn't killed them, the was John? And Teyla? And Ronon? Oh right, they thought he was dead, but they were wrong. Cowen had taken his gun. His uniform. His dog tags. His radio. Cowen had hit him, stunned him. No, Cowen had stunned him and then taken his gun, uniform, dog tags, and radio. Or was it the other way around? He wasn't quite sure anymore, the drugs were muddling his mind.

Lorne felt a frisson of fear at the thought. He was being taken! Where was Cowen? Had he escaped? He seemed to remember that, but now he wasn't so sure! Then where was John? Had Cowen killed him? He was so confused. Then he was afraid. What was Cowen going to do with him? Kill him. Rape him. Something clicked in his brain - that sounded familiar, rape. Cowen had hurt others. Was he going to do that to him too? Was that why Cowen drugged him? No! He didn't want that!

The Major stumbled and fell, his knees painfully hitting the floor. Hands grabbed at his uniform. Touching him, squeezing him. It was wrong. All wrong.

"Cowen?" Lorne slurred.

"Huh? What was that, Major?"

That wasn't Cowen.

"Not Cowen?" he garbled, more confused than ever.

"What's a cowen?"

The voice was closer now; breath tickled his ear. His empty ear. Where was his earpiece? His radio? Had it fallen out? What was going on?

Two powerful arms encircled around his chest and under his armpits. Lorne was lifted from his slumped position and stumbled forwards. That was funny; the Major didn't even remember falling. Someone dragged him away. Lorne wasn't sure how far or how fast he was dragged before his body gave up. He tried to make his legs work and barely managed it just before he felt himself being gently pushed against a wall. A wall was good. He could lean on a wall. A wall was sturdy. Sturdy like Atlantis. Atlantis and John. Coffee and Peppermint. John.

"John?" Kevin asked, hopefully.

"If you want, Major."

That didn't sound like John. Did it? Suddenly Lorne wasn't sure. Maybe it was John and he was wrong. After all, everything else was funny: sight and sound and smell and him. He felt funny, strange. Not right. He was dizzy and his head hurt, his stomach hurt and everything was not right, not at all. So he was probably wrong and the man was John. John must be right and he didn't want to hurt John's feelings by saying he wasn't right.

But he smelled right. Coffee and peppermint.

Now there were lips kissing him and hands touching him. John's lips and hands? Lorne allowed it even though he didn't feel well. Maybe John could make him feel better. He should probably kiss back but he felt sick. Lorne didn't want John to get sick too. Then, frowning into another kiss, he tried to pull away.

"No, John," Lorne pleaded, trying to focus on removing the lips and hands off his person.

"Sure, I'm John," a voice replied - a very non-John-like voice. "Here, let me show you, Major."

"No!"

Lorne felt the hands on his face. He didn't like it. He tried to push them away but found he couldn't. He couldn't lift his arms. He couldn't turn his head away from the cold, strong hands.

"\_NO!\_" Lorne protested again.

"Okay," the voice said. "We can do something else you'll enjoy. I promise, Major."

"Evan."

The hands temporarily stopped moving. "What?"

"Evan."

"Evan? Is that your name?" A weak nod. "Okay, then, Evan."

There was more, more to his name, but Lorne couldn't remember it just now. He didn't care either. Speaking was tiring and hard; he didn't want to speak anymore. He just wanted to sleep.

The warm body grinded into Lorne, sandwiching him against the wall. Lips clashed against each other. The man moaned in pleasure, his throat vibrating against Lorne's jaw line. The Major felt as though he was drowning - lost in the kiss, unable to surface for air.

Then, suddenly the body was gone. There was no one holding the Major up against the wall anymore. Lorne's eyes widen slightly as he began to slide towards the floor. But, miraculously, two large hands fisted the front of his uniform and lifted him. And, with enough momentum, they pulled him away from the wall. The cold hands let go and Lorne fell backward onto some unidentified, elevated soft surface. A

bed.

The incapacitated soldier just laid still â€" not that he had much choice. His chest heaved with each breath. He closed his eyes, happy to be left alone. Maybe now he could sleep. But, before he got the chance to surrender to the much-desired darkness, a weight descended onto his body. A husky grunt sounded somewhere above him as the strange man straddled his waist. A sudden pressure applied on his hips, thrusting downwards, as a pair of teeth nipped his neck, biting him. Cold hands worked at his belt buckle, unclasping it. But something felt weird. Lorne couldn't quite put his finger on it. Something felt different. John wouldn't be doing this. John was straight, right? John like women. Something felt wrong.

But the large, cold hands were back on his chest again, edging down to his waistline. "Let's get you out of these clothes."

Lorne made a small noise in protest.

His TAC vest was roughly stripped from his upper body.

"Hey," Lorne protested feebly, taken aback by the man's forcefulness.

The cold hands untucked his t-shirt before sliding underneath. "Hush, Evan, it'll feel real good soon, just you wait."

The lips were back. Crushing him, suffocating him. A tongue worked its way past his teeth. Lorne gagged. Wrong. All wrong.

In an attempt to get the strange man off him, Lorne bit down on the tongue. Only hard enough to draw blood.

A strangled scream echoed throughout the room. The soft, calm speech from before abruptly transformed into a harsh, steely voice. What was going on? Why was he mad now? All he did was try to stop? He'd been nice earlier and now he was mean. The strange man was confusing. He was confused. He didn't like him. He wanted the man to go away and let him sleep. He wanted John.

The flash of movement brought Lorne attention back to the sandy-haired man straddling his waist. Blood dripped from the stranger's lips, splashing onto the drugged Major's cheek. Warm blood. Cold hands. Then, before Lorne could react, the man roughly grabbed his shirt and ripped it open.

"You shouldn't have done that!"

The angry words washed over him, it was too much to handle at once - the conflicting emotions. Lorne really wanted to be left alone. He felt sick and he didn't like the man. He wanted to get away from here. Where was John? Had he abandoned him? Was he angry with him? Angry about the kiss? The kiss he'd given to this stranger? But he'd thought it was John! He'd thought he was kissing John!

\_Whack\_!

Lorne's head snapped to the right. A horrible stinging sensation radiated off the left side of his face. It hurt. Had the man hit him?

He thought he had hit him. He was really mean.

A cold hand grabbed his throat, pushing Lorne's head back into the pillow. Fingers lazily trailed down his exposed chest. He shivered. He wasn't sure if it was from the touch or from the cold.

Would the man leave him alone if he asked? Lorne wasn't sure but he didn't want to speak. Speaking was hard and he was tired. So tired. And his head was ringing. Pounding. He just wanted it all to stop. He wanted to sleep. Sleep, sleep, sleep. Sleep for a very long time.

The hand on his throat tightened. Lorne choked, trying to catch a breath. A weak moan escaped his lips before a second hand grabbed his groin through the thin material of his pants. It stayed there a while, stroking. When the appendage drew away it moved to tug at Lorne's waistband and belt. The hand around his throat loosened slightly. The Major gasped for air. And, in his effort to gain precious oxygen, he almost missed the sound of a zipper. Before he could understand what had happened something hard and warm and wet pushed up against his belly button.

Lorne tried to peer through the haze but all he saw was a blurry image of man.

And then all hell broke loose. There was a deafening crack followed by loud voices shouting strange words that seemed to startle the sandy-haired man. The stranger let go of his throat and twisted around to face the source of the interruption. The man's frustrated, startled growl added to the discord that had suddenly filled the room. Lorne felt his presence being yanked off his body.

The sandy-haired man twisted and turned, trying to get away from the hands that grabbed him. One of his flailing feet painfully met the side of Lorne's face and, for the second time in a few short minutes, the Major's head snapped to the right. Stars exploded in front of his eyes. His nausea was overpowering. His stomach rebelled. He rolled and vomited over the side of the bed. The shouting and yelling grew louder and blended into an atrocious roar. Lorne's head throbbed. He moaned.

A voice rose above the cacophony. "Lorne? LORNE!" The voice was male and strangely familiar. He didn't bother answering it. Why wouldn't they just let him sleep? Was it really such a bad thing?

Then there were hands on him again, returning him to his back. He made a faint noise in protest.

"Major Lorne, are you okay?" the man demanded. "What did he do to you?"

Reluctantly, Lorne opened eyes â€" funny, he didn't remember closing them. He looked up and, through the slits of his eyes, he saw who was bothering him. It was a giant of a man with a mass of dreadlocks on his head. He looked vaguely familiar. It was someone who made him feel safe. Because of this, he closed his eyes again. The man's hands continued to anxiously touch him. Chest, arms, face. It was as if he knew where he had touched him. The man above him fiercely swore before gently touching his disturbed belt buckle. The hands, slightly more frantic than before, briefly grappled with the top of his

pants.

"Thank the Ancestors," the man sighed.

"Ronon? Is he alright?" another new voice inquired.

This new voice was accompanied by a familiar scent. Coffee and peppermint. It smelled like him. Lorne's eyes snapped back open and he tensed. He desperately tried to find the source of the new voice. His eyes rested upon a black-haired soldier. He was different. He wasn't him.

"Yeah, he's fine. We got here in time. He got his shirt off but that seems to be all."

Lorne let his eyes slip shut. It wasn't him. He was safe. He was determined to sleep now.

"Major? Lorne, are you still with us?" A warm hand gently tapped his cheek.

Lorne frowned slightly at the annoying noise. It was too much. He couldn't handle it anymore. His head was pounding. His body hurt. He felt sick. And, finally, Lorne got his wish; he slowly fell asleep and surrendered himself to the encroaching darkness.

**\*\*~o~o~\*\***

A/N: **\*\*Whelp, there it is. Chapter one complete. I hope you all enjoyed it. I'm so glad I finally posted this, I've been meaning to do it for a while now but life kept getting in the way.\*\***

**\*\*I hope you guys didn't get too confused near the end. I tried to recreate the confusion and dread that Lorne was experiencing under the influence of the drug. I tried to keep it as clear and concise as I possibly could. I've never tried to write like that so it was a nice challenge.\*\***

**\*\*Some of you may be wondering why I used Lorne's last name while all the other characters are referred to by their first names (i.e. John and Rodney). Well, I did this because Major Evan Lorne is only ever referred to as 'Lorne' during the **\*\*Stargate: Atlantis\*\*** series. As such, I decided that I would only refer to the Major by his last name or rank in the narrative. However, several characters will refer to him as 'Evan' or other nicknames in certain dialogue. **\*\*****

**\*\*Until next time! Please review!\*\***

[EDIT: Some material in the first two chapters are adapted from previous story posted under the name Valerie Vancollie titled "Everything that Sparkles". I needed a basis for the exposition of characters and previous story seemed to fit. Obviously, past the very beginning the two stories differ greatly.]

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Title: Lost Among The Stars\*\***



\_\*\*Summary:\*\*\_ When Major Evan Lorne is attacked on a mission off-world, a series of events is put into motion that reveals the very secret John Sheppard had worked so hard to keep hidden. Eventual Sheppard/Lorne. Spoilers for "Coup d'etat" and "Doppleganger".

\_A/N: \_\*\*Wow! You guys have been super awesome! As such, I'm posting this chapter a little earlier than I originally planned. Let this be a lesson, the more reviews and favorites I receive on a story the faster I write. It's excellent motivation to keep my readers pleased and begging for more. \*\*

\*\*I hope you like this next chapter!\*\*

\_\*\*Characters:\*\*\_ Evan Lorne, John Sheppard, Rodney McKay, Ronon, Teyla, Elizabeth Weir, Sam Carter, Radek Zelenka, Jennifer Keller, and other minor characters and OCs.

\_Disclaimer:\_\*\* all rights belong to MGM.\*\*

\_Warning:\_\*\* mentions of non-consensual rape.\*\*

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

Falling, falling, fallingâ€¦

Lorne woke with a start, desperately clutching the bed beneath him, huffing like he'd just run a marathon. Adrenaline flooded his system. He instantly panicked, not recognizing his surroundings. Antiseptic smell, monotonous beeping, small bed, scratchy gown. The infirmary! He was in Atlantis. Instead of calming him, the realization only served to increase his panic. Why was he in the infirmary? What happened?

The beeping increased sharply, but Lorne ignored it as he tried frantically to remember what had happened to him. The last thing he could remember was standing in the banquet hall on PXK-233. Beyond that, everything was a big blur of emotions, colors, and sounds - all jumbled together in a horrible mash of contorting flashes. What had happened? Had something gone wrong? Was everyone okay?

Why couldn't he remember?

"Lorne?"

Even worse than being unable to recollect what had happened to him, and how he'd come to be in the infirmary, was the pure fear and helplessness that flooded the Major when he tried to force himself to remember.

"Lorne!"

A sudden slap across his face jarred the Major from his thoughts. Reflexively, his hand shot up and tightly grabbed the wrist of the person who'd hit him. It took him a moment to realize it was only John.

"What?" Lorne asked, confused.

"Oh, good, you're with me now," the Colonel replied, visibly relieved. "Sorry, but you spaced out and were starting to

hyperventilate."

Lorne blinked a few times as he processed what his commanding officer had just said. This time, when the beeping increased, he was abstemious enough to realize that it was his heart rate monitor. Slowly, he released the captured wrist from his crushing grip. Looking up, he met John's worried eyes. And, when he did, Lorne noticed how tired and stressed the dark-haired soldier appeared.

But before he could comment about it, the curtain next to his bed opened and Dr. Jennifer Keller rushed in.

"What's going on in here?" she demanded.

"He just woke up and had a bit of an anxiety attack," John explained.

Jennifer seemed to deflate at the admission. Then, frowning, she looked over the machines attached to her patient. "You shouldn't be awake yet," the Doctor tisked, clearly concerned about Lorne's still elevated heart rate.

"He's stubborn that way," John said with a fond smile.

"What happened?" Lorne asked, unable to wait any longer.

The anxiety of not knowing nearly bordered on outright panic. Lorne really hated being unable to remember, especially when the confused, fragmented memories he did have clearly indicated that something important had transpired. He was also starting to get an inclination that it was serious. A haunting suspicion entered the back of his mind. Nausea, cold hands, falling, pain.

The beeping increased sharply as Lorne fought for breath to stave off his rising fear.

"I don't think that's such a good idea right now. You need to rest," Jennifer gently stated. "You don't need any additional stress."

"No, what he needs is the truth," John argued. "Otherwise this scene will repeat itself the next time he wakes."

"I don't like it. I think a sedative would be the best thing for him right now."

"You don't know him," his commanding officer persisted. The sudden fierceness in his voice surprised Lorne. "He does better with more information, not less. Besides, you said he shouldn't be awake yet anyway. Should you really be giving him another sedative while whatever else you gave him earlier is still in his system?"

"Sir!" Lorne interrupted. "What happened? Something went wrong, didn't it? With the negotiations."

"Yes," John confirmed, suddenly sounding very reluctant.

"Is everyone else okay? Ronon? Teyla? McKay?" There was a moment of silence. "Oh god, Dr. Weir?"

"Everyone else is fine, including Elizabeth."

"Then what?" All of a sudden it dawned upon him. "I was attacked," he inferred.

Lorne's tone was emotionless as snatches of memory flashed before his eyes. He had a vague recollection of a man's touch and voice. Had he been stumbling? He was drugged, kidnapped. Victim to a man he considered a friend.

Oh God, victim. He was a \_victim\_!

"He spiked my drink, didn't he?"

"Yes, he did," John stated before continuing on quickly. "But you kept it together long enough to alert the team to what was going on. You lost your earpiece, so we could only follow your signal so far. The Disrutu stone made it impossible for us to use the LSD to find you. But Ronon was somehow able to track you. We got to you in time, before he could do anything."

The relief that flooded his system was indescribable. Lorne sank back against the pillows, sighing weakly at John who leaned forwards to look at him, clearly alarmed. Jennifer seemed happy, though, as his heart rate slowed further, back towards normal.

"I'll go let the others know you're awake," the Doctor told Lorne before turning towards the the Colonel. "Try to keep him calm."

John scowled at Jennifer's back as Lorne tried desperately to remember exactly what had happened to him. Even if his kidnapper hadn't managed to rape him, he \_needed\_ to know the details of what had transpired. How had he managed to spike his drink? Why hadn't he noticed? Had he tried to resist him? John said he'd contacted the team, so they obviously had realized what was going on, which explained some of the relief he recollected. Relief that did nothing to quell the fear and powerlessness he felt.

"Hey, hey, Lorne," soothed John as the Major's heart rate spiked once more. "It's okay, you're safe."

"How long, sir?"

Silence.

"How long have I been here?"

"Almost a full day."

Lorne was stunned he had been unconscious for so long.

"Where are the others?" Lorne questioned. "Are they here?"

"They're getting some coffee from the cafeteria. I'll go see what's taking Keller so long."

The Major nodded. So, with this confirmation, John quickly stepped out of sight to search for his missing friends.

It was odd. Lorne remembered John being there. Why? It was just a feeling, a fleeting impression. The Colonel couldn't possibly been

\_thereâ€|\_ could he? But, before he could dwell on that thought, his commanding officer returned. He had Rodney, Teyla, and Ronon in tow.

"Major Lorne!" Teyla exclaimed, quickly stepping up to his bedside. "How are you feeling?"

"Okay, I guess."

"We were so very worried."

Everyone in the room nodded in agreement.

"What do you remember?" Ronon asked.

"It's weird, I can't remember." Lorne began. "I just can't seem to get it all straight in my head, even the bits I do have!"

Rodney piped up, "That's the drug." Lorne turned his head to look at the scientist. "The drug he used causes anterograde amnesia. You could still get back your memory, later on that is."

"I know. It's just so frustrating!" Lorne replied, a bit embarrassed with how his renegade emotions. He wasn't one to express such feeling so freely.

"We understand," John quietly reassured him.

Lorne could only look at the Colonel in surprise for a few seconds, touched by his admission. Unable to voice it, he merely nodded his head. John gently smiled before patting his arm in a comforting manner.

Then, unexpectedly, Lorne had another flash of memory. Only instead of a visual, it was tactile. He could feel hands ghosting over his face and chest. Chills swept through him as he realized not all of the touches on his chest were through fabric; some of them were skin to skin. His grip on the bed sheets tightened as he fought off the rising panic. John said the team had gotten to him in time, that nothing had happened. He knew John wouldn't lie to him about that. But still...

"Ronon, when- when you found me..." his breath hitched.

"Yes?"

"Nothing happened?"

The Satedan warrior hesitated for a second but replied nonetheless. "He had ripped off your shirt, but that was all."

Shit. He'd removed his shirt and touched him. Lorne swallowed and suppressed a shudder at the thought. He tried to rationalize away his feelings. If Ronon was right, then he really couldn't complain, could he? After all, he was always bare-chested when he went to the beach and even enjoyed the appreciative looks he got when doing so. But the touch... it made his skin crawl to think of his would-be rapist touching him. Even the half remembered touches caused a wave of disgust to crash over him.

John must have sensed his inner turmoil because he leaned forward comfort him again. Lorne almost reached out, desperately wanting to feel safe in the Colonel's arms. But then, suddenly, images and emotions slammed into him. Hysteric, Lorne forcefully shoved John away, unthinkingly, gasping as he attempted to control his feelings. He scrambled to sit up. Scampering away from his friends. Fear and disgust and helplessness welled up inside of him along with flashes of naked skin, traces of a familiar scent and, of all things, the taste of cherries.

"Lorne? LORNE!"

This time, John's voice did manage to break through the Major's rising panic. Lorne was able to draw himself to focus on the present. As he did so, the incessant beeping decreased to a more manageable level as he got his breathing under control as well. Focusing on Ronon, he made himself calm down some more - silently telling himself, over and over, that it was done, finished. The team had rescued him and... wait, they had never said anything about the kidnapper.

"You caught him?" Lorne asked.

"Yes, we did," Ronon proudly declared.

Lorne's head turned to look at his commanding officer.

John's lips were clenched in a straight line. "Elizabeth is still on PXK-233, overseeing his detainment. We wanted to bring him back here but Lord Solove demanded that he receive punishment on his homeworld."

"Elizabeth is still trying to decide if the new trade agreement should be honored," Rodney added.

Lorne nodded. He was relieved that his kidnapper wouldn't harm anyone ever again, including himself.

"What just happened?" Teyla inquired uncertainly, referring to his most recent panic attack.

The Major winced, thinking about how he'd shoved John aside. Glancing at the Colonel, Lorne was pleased to see the dark-haired soldier wasn't holding it against him.

"His scent, I think," Lorne explained, a little uncertain himself.

"Let me," Ronon said, stepping closer to John and taking a sniff. "Yup, you smell just like Baltier."

Lorne flinched at the casual use of his would-be rapist's name.

"You mean-" John began, horrified.

Rodney nervously cleared his throat. "They do say smell is the most powerful memory trigger."

"Oh God, I'm so sorry."

Closing his eyes, Lorne leaned back into his pillow, wishing away all the events of the past hour. "It wasn't your fault, sir. You just caught me unawares." Lorne sighed. He pressed his hands to his face, hiding the embarrassed blush threatening to make itself known. "Why me?" he mumbled, mostly to himself.

"Your eyes."

Lorne blinked slowly, turning his gaze toward his commanding officer. "Sir?"

John awkwardly cleared his throat. "Baltier seemed to be fixated on your eyes."

"That's all?"

John shifted uneasily before Rodney came to his aid. "Your, uh, aura of authority and, uh, power. Apparently." The scientist smirked slightly at the next statement. "He kept going on and on about how you were strong and a leader. Ronon called it an alpha male thing."

"Alpha male?" Lorne blinked slowly, trying to wrap his head around the concept. "He thought I had the aura of a leader." He smiled for the first time in what felt like days. "Sir, you had better watch out or else I might get your job."

"You wish!" John replied, grinning.

"Yeah," Rodney added. "If anything, you're the baby of the group. I have no idea why he saw you as an alpha male."

"Maybe he just realized my true potential."

Rodney raised an eyebrow. "This is a mentally ill rapist we're talking about."

The smile on Lorne's face was faded. "Yeah," he all but whispered, trying to blend back into the covers.

"McKay!" John barked.

Silence filled the room.

"So what happens now?" the Major demanded, trying to break the tension.

"Well, it's still in the early stages, but I'll be returning tomorrow to the planet to oversee Baltier's trial and punishment. To see if it meets my standards," John said. "Apparently, it's my right as your commanding officer."

"I'm going, too," Ronon gruffly announced, frowning slightly, "as a witness."

Rodney snorted. "I'd rather not step foot on that planet ever again, thank you very much."

"Neither would I," Teyla agreed.

"What do you think his punishment will be?" the Major asked.

John scowled. "Death would be too kind."

"On Sateda he would have been castrated."

"Hey, that's not a bad idea," the Colonel voiced, snapping his fingers. "I'll have to recommend that to Lord Solove."

Just then the curtain was pulled aside and Jennifer walked in. "Ah, Major Lorne. It's good to see you still awake. No more panic attacks?"

"Just one, ma'am," Lorne said, slightly embarrassed by his admission.

Glancing down at the chart in her hand, Jennifer commented, "Don't worry, that's to be expected after such a traumatic event. I plan on keeping you at least overnight for observation." Looking back up at Lorne, she snapped the chart closed and said, "Alright then, I'm just going to give you a quick once over and then let you rest." Then, addressing the rest of the crowd around the bed, the Doctor declared, "Visiting hours are over, people! You can check on him tomorrow."

Slowly, everyone started to trail out of the infirmary. A chorus of "Get well" and "See you tomorrow" lingered long after the room emptied. Eventually Jennifer finished her exam and also left.

Lorne was alone at last.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

John dreaded going back to PXX-233.

But responsibility forced him to go. It was his job afterall.

It had been sunny the first time he stepped out of the Stargate, but this time it was raining. Big, fat raindrops. Within minutes John and Ronon were soaked.

The two teammates began jogging toward the castle looming in the distance. Halfway there they were met by Lieutenant Abrams, one of Lorne's soldiers that had stayed behind to guard Elizabeth until John returned.

John nodded at him in greeting. "Lieutenant, report!"

"Colonel Sheppard!" Abrams snapped a quick salute before stating, "Dr. Weir spent most of yesterday with Lord Solove. He refuses to allow his Head Protector to be taken off-world. He's locked up in the dungeons right now, sir. No one's to talk to him or see him until the trial. It took all of Dr. Weir's negotiating power to even let us visit him," he sneered, making reference to Baltier, Lorne's attacker.

"And?"

"The bastard was a sniveling mess, sir. Keep claiming that it was the

Major's fault..." the Lieutenant shuttered, "t-that he \_wanted\_ it."

Ronon growled. John felt the same.

The three eventually reached the castle. After being given towels to dry themselves off, they were greeted by two Protectors who quickly ushered them toward the throne room. Just as they were to pass through the final doorway Abrams suddenly stopped walking.

"Sir?"

"Yeah."

"Major Lorne," Abrams swallowed, glanced down at his hands briefly before looking up to catch the Colonel's eye, "is he okay?"

There was a pregnant pause. "He'll be fine. Nothing happened." John's voice never wavered.

Abrams nodded, turned his back, and ran ahead to catch up to Ronon and their escorts. John watched after him. Not sure if he had spoken the truth or if it was just wishful thinking. The Colonel shook his head. Lorne was stoic, resolute even, he would get through this. He had too.

"He'll be fine." John said again, more to himself than anyone else.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

"This is an outrage!"

John slammed his hand down on the table in front of him, cracking it.

The trial had been a farce. It had barely lasted more than an hour. Lord Solove had led the proceedings, directing the questioning of the witnesses. Two servants who handled the drinks at the banquet testified that had not seen Lorne drink anything other than Luptis all night. However, the guard, who was on duty at the door Lorne and Baltier exited, claimed that the Major stank of wine and was clearly incapacitated. The two accounts contradicted each other so much that they were dismissed entirely.

Baltier was eventually called up to speak. The Head Protector spoke slowly and clearly. He spun a ridiculous story that Lorne had a little too much to drink and asked to be escorted to the guest quarters. "One thing led to another and Evan voiced his attraction," Baltier shrugged casually. "He consented."

John nearly exploded at the informal use of Lorne's first name. "Consented?! You drugged him, you bastard!" It took all of Ronon's strength to hold back his friend, who fully intended to attack the sandy-haired man before him. It took the threat of being removed from the trial for the Colonel to finally calm down. After that Elizabeth, John, and his team were not allowed to speak.

It was only at the very end of the proceedings that Ronon was called forward as a witness. The Satedan warrior answered all the questions in great detail. He explained the call for help and the subsequent



search for the Major. He described the damning position that Baltier was found in. Ronon asserted that the Major was dazed and confused, nearly unconscious. Even if he had not been drugged, Ronon stated, he would not have been in the right mind to consent to anything.

After a brief break, Lord Solove returned to the throne room and gave his verdict. Baltier was to be publicly whipped and imprisoned for a fortnight. "You will no longer bear the burden of Head Protector. You will have to earn your title back."

The sentence had been lenient. Too lenient for such a crime.

Before they could react, the guests were taken back to Elizabeth's quarters. It was there John had almost broken the table. "A flogging! That's all?" He ran his hands through his spiked hair as he paced back and forth. "Lorne was almost raped and theyâ€¦" John puffed out air angrily, "They took away his title. Big deal. He's still a fucking Protector. Some Protector. Who's to stop him from doing it again?"

"There's not much we can do," Elizabeth voiced. "We have no power here."

"We could take him back with us," Ronon said. "It wouldn't be hard."

Elizabeth sighed. "Tempting, but no. We can't risk it."

"Risk it?" John sneered. "You aren't seriously still thinking of trading with these," he waved his arm around wildly, "these \_savages\_."

"Of course not!"

Silence fell over the room's occupants.

Elizabeth exhaled deeply. "I believe they only held the trail \_because of us\_. They clearly did not take what happen to Major Lorne seriously. Somehow I would not be surprised if this has happened in the past." Elizabeth eased herself down into a well furnished chair beside the damaged table. "It was all a show. Lord Solove was just trying to save any trade between our two people." She pressed her lips together, displeased with the turn of events. "No, there is nothing here for us now. Not even the promise of Disrutu stone can remedy that disgusting display of justice."

Ronon stepped closer to his team leader. "I think we should leave."

John frowned. "Before the punishment? I fully intend to see \_that man\_ in pain, no matter how little."

"If what Dr. Weir says is true, I doubt they would let us watch," Ronon argued. "Lord Solove probably isn't even planning to put his praised Head Protector through such a public display." The Satedan shook his head. "Think about it, there was barely anyone in the throne room during the trial. Just us and a few advisors. The witnesses were barely in the room to begin with."

"Just a show," John whispered, horrified. "You're right, we should

leave. I don't like these guys anymore. Lieutenant Abrams?"

"Sir?"

"Pack up, we're going back to Atlantis."

"Yes, sir."

A half hour later the group was ready to head back to Stargate. A few guards attempted to stop them. The Colonel had ordered his men to expect resistance and to act in kind. Ronon took the order the heart and even knocked down a particularly pushy Protector that tried to detain Elizabeth.

"Dr. Weir!"

John and Ronon whipped around to face Lord Solove. They raised their weapons against the local ruler. Abrams covered their backs while two other Marines protectively surrounded Elizabeth.

"Yes?" Elizabeth sniffed.

"You are leaving?"

"Yes."

"But what of trade?"

"I am cutting off all relations with this planet," she said bluntly. "You have nothing we want."

"But the Disrutu st-"

"Inconsequential."

Lord Solove blinked, clearly not expecting such hostility from his once honored guests. He attempted to step forward but was stopped when John clicked the safety off his P-90. Visibly swallowing, he stepped back and tried again, "There must be somethingâ€¦"

"Baltier."

"What?"

"Give us Baltier," Elizabeth spoke clearly, "Allow us to punish him as we see fit and I will \_consider\_ reopening negotiations."

"I can't-"

"Then we have nothing to discuss." She turned back around. "An attack on one of my people is an attack on me."

"But-"

Elizabeth continued toward the exit. The group moved to follow their leader. "Ronon?"

"Yeah?"

"Shoot anyone who gets in our way."

The Satedan bared his teeth in a feral grin. "With pleasure."

Luckily the rain had stopped, leaving behind a dense fog. The group trudged through the thick mud, burdened under their overnight packs. Fortunately, Ronon led the way so they didn't have to worry about getting lost. But progress was slow. It took at least an hour to get back to the Stargate and dial in.

And, when they passed through the event horizon, they were greeted by a nervous Rodney.

"Back so soon?"

No one responded.

"Sheppard?"

"I don't want to talk about it, McKay."

"It didn't go well?"

John snorted. "You could say that." He clipped the P-90 to the front of his TAC vest. "I have to go see Lorne."

Elizabeth nodded. "I'll try to come by later but first I want to make sure no one else ever returns to P XK-233. It will be marked as a hostile planet in our database."

Rodney huffed as he watched his two friends walk in opposite directions. "What the hell happened?" he demanded.

"Come on," Ronon slung his arm around the shorter man's shoulders. "I'll tell you over a cup of coffee."

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

\_A/N:\_ \*\*Oh, no! With Baltier still on the loose what's Lorne to do?  
:P \*\*

\*\*Now this is just the beginning of our little adventure. I hope to have a lot more action in later chapters for our favorite heroes to face. And, don't worry, the Wraith will definitely be making an appearance.\*\*

\*\*If you guys haven't figured it out yet, I have made the timeline post-"Sunday". Dr. Carson Beckett won't make any appearances in this story, though he will be referenced a few times. In my mind this story takes place in the beginning of season 4. The events of "Doppelganger" have not yet occurred.\*\*

\*\*A lot of\*\* Lost Among The Stars \*\*switches between John's and Lorne's perspective. They are both equal characters in my mind. As such, I hope to offer a lot character exposition and background in this story. \*\*

\*\*Please favorite and review! XOXO\*\*

[EDIT: Some material in the first two chapters are adapted from previous story posted under the name Valerie Vancollie titled "Everything that Sparkles". I needed a basis for the exposition of characters and previous story seemed to fit. Obviously, past the very beginning the two stories differ greatly.]

### 3. Chapter 3

**\*\*Title: Lost Among The Stars\*\***

**\_\*\*Summary:\*\*\_** When Major Evan Lorne is attacked on a mission off-world, a series of events is put into motion that reveals the very secret John Sheppard had worked so hard to keep hidden. Eventual Sheppard/Lorne. Spoilers for "Coup d'etat" and "Doppleganger".

**\_A/N: \_\*\*The reception to this story is very encouraging! I was a little concerned that people might not like my pairing or that people wouldn't be interested in a Lorne-centric story. But, surprisingly, that hasn't been the case.\*\***

**\*\*In truth, I have always loved Major Lorne. He's a secondary character that isn't one dimensional, like so many of the other characters are. Throughout the \*\*Stargate: Atlantis\*\* series you learn little tidbits about him (like that he has a sister or that he grew up in San Francisco). Anyway, I have always enjoyed seeing other people's depictions of Lorne, so I thought I'd finally give it a try.\*\***

**\*\*Well, putting all that aside, I just want to thank everyone who had commented on this story. I love hearing from you. I try to take your suggestions and criticisms into consideration when updating and editing my stories. So please, keep the reviews coming!\*\***

**\*\*Well, without any further ado, here is Chapter 3 of \*\*Lost Among The Stars\*\*. Enjoy!\*\***

**\_\*\*Characters:\*\*\_** Evan Lorne, John Sheppard, Rodney McKay, Ronon, Teyla, Elizabeth Weir, Sam Carter, Radek Zelenka, Jennifer Keller, and other minor characters and OCs.

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**\_Warning:\_\*\* mentions of non-consensual rape.\*\***

**\*\*~O~O~\*\***

John slowly trudged into the infirmary. He had briefly stopped in the locker room to take off his gear and change his mud covered boots. He knew he wouldn't be allowed to visit Lorne if Jennifer spotted even a speck of dirt within her domain.

The lanky, dark-haired soldier nodded at the nurse on duty.

"He's sleeping," the nurse informed him. "Try to be gentle."

When John stepped around the privacy curtain he nearly gasped. Lorne was pale, too pale. A ring of dark purples and blues circled around his neck. The outlines of fingers stood out sharply against the

marble-like skin. The bruises were only interrupted by a single bite mark along the Major's jugular. In any other situation John would have made a joke about hickeys. But now, it seemed wrong. All wrong.

John watched as Lorne unconsciously licked his chapped lips, his tongue darting in and out.

When they had first found Lorne, drugged and collapsed on the bed, there had been blood all over his cheek, lips, and teeth. At first John had thought him to have internal injuries, fearful he was coughing up blood. But it was soon revealed the blood wasn't his, but rather from his attacker.

The blood has long been whipped away.

A small swell of pride surged in John's chest. Lorne had never stopped fighting, even when he was effectively overpowered. He had still found a way to injure his would-be rapist. Biting Baltier's tongue might have saved him from a horrible fate. It had temporarily stopped the attack, allowing his team to have enough time to rescue him.

But Lorne had always been a fighter, John reminded himself. He never took things sitting down.

Watching the sleeping soldier in front of him, John couldn't help but think back to when Lorne had been kidnapped by Cowen and the Genii.

It was supposed to be a routine mission. Though John had come to learn there was no such thing.

Random violence? An attack by the Wraith? At the time they didn't know. Dr. Lindsay Novak had just rushed back to Atlantis under the Major's orders, not fully understanding what was happening to her military escort. John and his team immediately responded. But all they found was a dying fire, burned bodies, and dog tags.

The Colonel had been overcome by guilt. He let his men down, and now they were dead. Dead and gone. The walk back to the Stargate had been silent. Even Rodney did not complain about the heat or the difficult terrain. And, when they had returned, Elizabeth had the nerve to tell him he would not be leading the investigation - though he did feel slightly better knowing that Ronon and Teyla would do everything in their power to find the truth about what happened to Lorne and his men.

Slightly comforted by that fact, John pushed all feelings aside to go after the ZPM that Ladon Radim had been ransoming. That Genii sneak. It wasn't until he had been gassed and interrogated that he learned of Lorne's fate. He nearly fell over in total disbelief when he first entered the cage.

"So, you come to rescue us?" Dead man talking.

"Until a moment ago, I thought you were dead..."

John spoke the truth. He had tucked the memory Lorne away, putting him in the very back of his mind with the rest of the dead men he

served with. Holland. Mitch. Dex. The list went on and on. But the relief of taking a name off that list was overwhelming.

John surveyed his imprisoned soldiers. They wore peasant clothing. Their uniforms long since burned away on the dead bodies of strangers. Lorne's men had been there several days already. Some of the other teams even longer. Most of them looked thin and pale. Several, like Lorne, sported bruises that disappeared under the drab, thread-bare cloth.

With renewed strength and hope of rescue, the men drew toward their commanding officer. It wasn't long before Rodney and the other members of his strike team woke up from the knockout gas. But, before John could think of a plan, Ladon returned to set them free. Adrenaline sent them rushing back to the Stargate, desperate to return to Atlantis before the nuclear bomb exploded and destroyed everything in its path.

When John finally stepped through the event horizon, and the shield was raised, he witnessed Lorne collapse into the open arms of a Marine. The Major was quickly rushed to the infirmary. The Major had suffered the worst of Cowen's experiments because he had the strongest natural gene among the captured group. As such, Lorne was taken from the cage more often than the rest, stuck with needles to drain his blood and beaten when he refused to activate Ancient devices.

John had visited him in the infirmary. But back then Lorne hadn't been sleeping, he had been unconscious. Pain and exhaustion, they told him. He had lost too much blood for the sake of the Genii's gene research.

After Lorne had finally awoken, Ladon visited him and apologize for his treatment. John wasn't too surprised when Lorne forgave his captor.

"Forgiveness has nothing to do with absolving someone of their crime. But rather, it has to do with relieving yourself of the burden of being a victim, sir." To let go of the pain. To transform from victim into survivor," Lorne told him later.

It was then that John vowed to find a friend in Major Lorne. Before he had simply taken his second in command for granted. Thanking him for the occasional rescue while allowing him to depart on some of the less interesting, but no less important, missions. Plus the man was amazing at paperwork.

But John knew nothing about Lorne. Sure, he had his military and SGC files but there was not much to be said about the integrity of a person from the white bureaucratic documents. Afterall, his own file was more of a soap-opera than a testament to his time in the Air Force.

There was only one black mark in Lorne's file. It was from his time at Stargate Command. A surveyor serving under him - Lieutenant Ritter was his name - had been murdered off-world. The death had been attributed to negligence and carelessness. Lorne's carelessness. But, after an extensive review, General Hammond had permitted Lorne to continue working with his 'gate team, SG-12.

John never held the mark against him. He had enough black marks in his own file to know how crushing the guilt could be.

Confronted with such ignorance about his second in command, the Colonel began asking around about the Major. Soldiers and scientists alike had nothing but good things to say about Lorne. He was polite and a good conversationalist. One particularly talkative botanist even admitted to having a crush on the man.

In the end, it was Dr. Radek Zelenka that was able to give him some answers. The Czech scientist usually worked closely with Lorne both on and off-world. The two shared a similar relationship to the one John shared with Rodney, though less bickering was involved.

If Radek had been surprised that John was asking questions about Lorne he didn't show it. It was through him that John learned that the Major knew how to fight with a Jaffa Staff Weapon. He was one of a select few to be taught by Teal'c while at the SGC. Unfortunately, the Atlantis expedition did not possess such weapon. Radek, however, was able to tell John that Lorne still continued to practice with a three-quarter staff while off-duty. The Major had even gone as far to give lessons to some interested Marines during his down time.

Armed with this information, John had snuck into one of Lorne's training sessions and was able to watch for several minutes before anyone noticed him.

"Care to join us, sir?"

"Not at all, Major. I'm just interested in the capabilities of my men."

Needless to say, John was impressed. Lorne moved with such grace and ease that he could make any seasoned warrior jealous. Suddenly John wished to witness the Major with the powerful Jaffa weapon. The Colonel could only assume he wielded it with as much deadly accuracy as he did a P-90. After the lesson was over John invited Lorne to his private sparring sessions with Ronon and Teyla.

"We could use some new talent in the ring. I'm tired of getting my ass kicked." John grinned when Lorne hesitated. "Bring your staff and they won't know what hit them."

Slowly the two soldiers began to hang out more and more. They trained together and sometimes ate together, emergencies permitting of course. John found Lorne to be thoughtful, loyal, and composed. He was an excellent leader who could make the hard decisions for the betterment of the mission. He also had easily earned the respect of those serving under him.

John envied Lorne's ability to move about the ranks. Other soldiers didn't often approach the Colonel with their questions and concerns. They were too easily cowed by the craziness of his plans or the standoffish presence his team exuded. As such, it was Lorne who was usually called to settle disputes among the masses. Radek even got him to respond to disturbances among the scientists, at least the ones that couldn't be handled by Rodney's big mouth.

Over the months John learned more and more about the man who was his second in command. Lorne's sarcasm rivaled that of his own. And he

was smart. Not MENSA smart like John or Rodney, but he had a firm grasp on the softer sciences and most languages. Lorne excelled at learning Ancient. While he couldn't speak it or read it as fluently as the linguists - they were the best of the best after all - he could read instructions on devices and warnings around doorways. Such abilities came in handy on a mission more than once.

Also, Lorne could paint. Interestingly enough, it was Ronon that told John about the Major's artistic hobby. The Satedan had found out sometime after that fateful Sunday when the Atlantis expedition had lost Dr. Carson Beckett. Lorne had sent the painting he made that day back with Carson's body to Scotland. Ronon said it was a gift for Carson's mother, an apology of sorts.

Since then Lorne had kept painting. There was evidence of this when a fairly large canvas sporting a blood red battle scene appeared in Ronon's room. The Satedan warrior had loved it, hanging it proudly above his bed. Only a select few were also gifted paintings from the Major. Among those few were Radek and Dr. David Parrish, another scientist that Lorne was friendly with. John was secretly disappointed that he never got a painting for himself.

John's team lunches grew more crowded. Lorne ate with them more frequently, often joined by Radek or David. And then, eventually, John's curiosity evolved into something else. Yes, the two soldiers shared respect and appreciation for each other, but somewhere along the line John found himself falling in love with Lorne.

Yes, John had been previously been married but that hadn't turned out too well. He loved Nancy, but not romantically. He did it more to get back into his father's good graces than for the domestic homelife. In terms of sexuality, John never really labeled himself. He had had many girlfriends and boyfriends in the past. Who was he to judge? You love who you love.

Love.

He loved Lorne. This realization was only solidified during their latest mission on PXX-233.

When John had heard Lorne's weak calls for help over his earpiece during the feast, his heart stuttered to a stop. He had immediately dropped his drink and stood up from his seat to search for the Major. Lieutenant Abrams and Teyla took charge of Elizabeth's safety while John, Rodney, and Ronon rushed to Lorne's aid. John didn't know what was happening, which terrified him. Lorne was missing, drugged and taken. The Colonel didn't know what to expect. Was it a solo attack? Coordinated? Were they all in danger, or just Lorne? John feared that the other members of his team would also be incapacitated. They had to be careful.

Thanks to Rodney's quick thinking, they were able to boost their radio signals, allowing them to track Lorne throughout the twisting hallways of the castle. While they searched John could hear Lorne's heavy breathing, the sound of his stumbling, and scared quake in his voice when he mumbled the name of the former Genii leader, Cowen. Occasionally another strange voice would join his. The kidnapper's voice. What was said, whispered in private, disturbed John. Promises of carnal desire. Obscenities and assurances of lustful undertakings. As the seconds flew by, John became more and more certain of Lorne's



possible fate.

Rape.

He tried talking to the Major, but received no response. It was then that all the noises from Lorne's earpiece just stopped. Several minutes later Rodney found Lorne's headset on the ground in the middle of a corridor.

John had taken out his LSD, temporarily forgetting the disruptive properties of the castle walls. Curse that Disrutu stone! As such, it took another minute until Ronon could pick up the trail again. The Satedan tracker finally led them to a locked door several turns away from the discarded earpiece.

When Ronon had kicked down the door nothing could have prepared John for the sight before him. Lorne lay, unmoving, half naked, on a bed with his kidnapper straddling his waist. One of the man's large hands closed around the Major's throat while the other gently stroked the drugged soldier's bare chest. The rapist's exposed erection proudly lay across Lorne's belly button.

John had surged forward, ripping the man off Lorne. The kidnapper flailed and hit Lorne. The Colonel's orders to Rodney and Ronon mingled with the sandy-haired man's surprised shouts. John vaguely remembered the sounds of vomiting while he effectively restrained the rapist with some carefully placed strikes. Leaving Rodney to guard the now unconscious man, John rushed over to the Satedan who was carefully checking over Lorne.

"Ronon? Is he alright?"

Lorne tensed at the sound of John's voice, his eyes snapping open in fear. His glazed eyes rolled around in his head until they made contact with the Colonel. A flash a recognition allowed the Major to relax.

"Yeah, he's fine. We got here in time. He got his shirt off but that seems to be all."

John nodded, focusing back at the nearly unconscious soldier. "Major? Lorne, are you still with us?" He gently tapped the bloody cheek.

It was then that Lorne finally passed out.

The rest of the night was a blur. Elizabeth was informed of the situation and she gave them permission to take the Major back to Atlantis for medical attention. Teyla, Ronon, and Rodney had joined their team leader on the long trip back to the Stargate while the rest of Lorne's team and Elizabeth stayed on P XK-233 to help secure the attacker.

During the whole trip back, Lorne remained unresponsive. Rodney reassured them it was most likely the drug's fault. Jennifer had greeted them in the control room, ready to escort her patient to the infirmary. Despite Ronon's earlier assessment, John privately ordered Jennifer to test Lorne with a Rape Kit.

It came back negative.

John kept watch until Lorne woke up the next day. Several people came to visit the Major, including Radek, David, and the pretty botanist. The latter left a vase of flowers from her lab. Thankfully, John was able to keep the nature of the attack confidential. He knew that the whole of Atlantis didn't need to know that Major Lorne was almost raped while off-world.

Much to John's relief, Lorne woke up. But his alleviation didn't last long. Lorne had suffered an anxiety attack and didn't seem to remember much of the events about the previous day. John didn't know if that was a blessing or a curse. Lorne had been scared, terrified about what might have happened. Luckily, John and his team were able to settle any doubts in the man's mind.

Then it was John's turn to be frightened. In a compelling moment of love - though some would say weakness - he went to hug Lorne. The Major had reacted violently, pushing John away with such unexpected force that he almost didn't catch himself on the chair beside the bed. His scent, of all things, triggered another flashback.

Horrified, John had remained at the back of the group for the remainder of the visit. He did not visit Lorne again before departing to P XK-233 for the trial that morning.

"Sir?"

Lorne finally stirred, snapping John out of this thoughts. His eyes slowly blinked open as they chased away the fogginess of sleep. Struggling to sit up, Lorne smacked his dry, cracked lips.

"Want some water, Major?"

"Yes, thank you," he replied. His Adam's apple bobbed up and down when he swallowed. The bruises on his neck danced in the infirmary's bright lighting.

Taking back the empty cup, John waited a good distance from the bed before stating, "I have bad news."

Lorne's head snapped up and John mentally winced at his own bluntness.

"What happened?"

John pursed his lips. "The trial did not go as expected," he said diplomatically. When Lorne didn't respond immediately, the Colonel continued, "The whole thing was just some sick show. It turns out Lord Solove never really intended to punish his precious Head Protector. He was sentenced to a flogging and a few days in prison, which we doubt was even carried out. We left the planet before anything happened. Elizabeth has effectively cut all relations with P XK-233."

"S-so he's still out there?"

John's gazed softened. "I'm sorry, Lorne."

The Major buried his face in his hands. His breath shuttered. "Thank you for telling me in person, sir. But I think I would like to be

alone now."

"You sure? I could wait if you'd like."

"No."

"Alright. I'll see you tomorrow."

And, respecting the man's wishes, John left the infirmary.

\*\*~o~o~\*\*

Lorne was released from the infirmary a few hours later. While Jennifer gave him a clean bill of health, he was ordered to visit Dr. Kate Heightmeyer, Atlantis' resident psychiatrist, before he could go back to active duty.

Wanting to get it over with, Lorne made his way to Kate's office.

"Ah, Major Lorne, how are you?"

"I've been better."

Kate's lip quirked in a half smile. "Yes, I suppose you have. Shall we get started? I don't want to keep you from your duties for too long."

"I appreciate it, Dr. Heightmeyer."

Lorne moved fully into the pleasantly decorated room. It was not his first time in her office. He had been there briefly after his time with the Genii. While that had been almost a year prior, the office had not changed much. The door automatically slid shut behind him, blocking out any and all noise from the hallway beyond. Kate finally settled down in a cream colored chair in front of her desk. Lorne purposely forwent the plush seat by the door as he moved to take the uncomfortable metal chair across from her. If the Doctor noticed his choice in seating she didn't comment.

"Why don't you tell me what happened?"

Lorne looked at her skeptically. "What do you already know?"

"That doesn't matter," she waved her hand dismissively. "What matters is what you are comfortable with sharing."

The Major sighed and leaned back in his chair, contemplating where to start. "I was supposed to be on sentry duty," he eventually said, "but I let my guard down. I still don't really know how it happened, or when. But one moment I was talking with-" Lorne paused, unwilling to say his name.

Kate waited patiently for him to continue. She didn't interrupt or ask questions.

When he recomposed himself, Lorne started again. "One moment I was talking to him and then I was being pulled down a hallway. I remember stopping a few timesâ€¦ I think I fell at one point. He was really

handsy, kept groping and kissing me." Lorne scratched at the bite mark on his neck absentmindedly. "He left me alone for a moment and I was able to radio for help. I knew Colonel Sheppard and the team was on their way but the drugs were making me confused. There's a big chunk of time missing from when I called for help to when I wound up in that room."

"I must have told him my name because he kept calling me 'Evan'. No one calls me by my first name except my mom and my sister," the Major shrugged. Getting back on track he spoke, "He started kissing me again, but I pushed him away. The drugs were really messing with head at that point. I eventually was lifted into a bed and he straddled me. That's when I recall biting his tongue. He got angry. He wasn't so gentle after that. He hit me and ripped off my shirt. Or maybe he got my shirt off then hit me, I'm not too sure." Lorne scrubbed his hands over his face. "Anyway, he did some stuff and when I tried to fight him off he choked me. It wasn't too long after Sheppard arrived with the cavalry."

"Nothing happened," Lorne asserted, meeting Kate's critical eye. "I would have remembered. And Ronon promised me nothing happened."

"I don't think what happened to you was nothing."

"We didn't have sex."

"Sex implies consent."

"Fine then, he didn't rape me."

"The group came back from PXK-233 several hours ago. Did you talk to anyone from the team?"

Lorne slightly shifted in his seat, making himself more comfortable before stating, "Yeah, Colonel Sheppard came and saw me in the infirmary. He told me the outcome of the trial."

"And how do you feel about the outcome?"

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Okay," Kate nodded. She tried a different topic to open the conversation back up. "Dr. Keller noted that the drug you were slipped causes retrograde amnesia." Tapping her chin, she asked, "Have you had any flashbacks? Nightmares?"

"No nightmares," Lorne answered honestly. "But I had two panic attacks shortly after I woke up back on Atlantis."

"What do you think caused them?"

"Well, I had the first one right after I woke up. I was scared and confused. I didn't immediately remember what happened so I panicked. Colonel Sheppard calmed me down. He told me everyone was safe. That I was safe. He told me what happened."

"And the second time?"

Lorne looked down at his lap, embarrassed. "I didn't- It wasn't his faultâ€¦"

"Major Lorne?"

"Coffee and peppermint." He glanced up, hands twisting together anxiously. "Sheppard smells like coffee and peppermint. A-and he smelled like coffee and peppermint. I just wasn't prepared for it. McKay said scent is the most powerful memory trigger." Fisting his hands into his pants, Lorne grimaced. "I just couldn't handle it so soon after the incident."

"That's understandable," Kate hummed. "Was this similarly a problem during the assault?"

"Yeah." He shivered. "And that's the ridiculous part. I distinctly remember Sheppard being there. But I knew he couldn't have been. I thought he..." Lorne trailed off. "It's all very frustrating," he admitted.

Sensing his reluctance, the Doctor stood and moved toward her desk. "I know this is difficult, but I appreciate your honesty and openness. You seem to have a firm grasp on the events during your mission, as traumatic as they were." Lorne's eyes followed her casual movements. Pen in hand, she began writing on a slip of paper. When she finished she approached the Major. "Many people in your position would be in denial, but you are not. To be frank, it's very comforting."

Kate lowered herself down to perch on the edge of the small table before Lorne. "In terms of Colonel Sheppard, I know you both work together regularly. If you'd like, I can approach him as a third party and perhaps recommend some new shampoo. It would help with any flashbacks in the future, particularly those that might happen in the field."

"That's very thoughtful, Dr. Heightmeyer, but completely unnecessary," Lorne commented. "The first time just caught me unawares."

"Very well." She handed him the form she signed earlier on her desk. "I'm going to put you back on active duty. I cannot, in right conscious, allow Atlantis to be without you for any extended period of time. Who knows what would happen?" Kate joked.

Lorne shyly smiled, but he didn't refute her claim.

"But promise me, if you have any nightmares or flashbacks you'll come see me?"

"Yes, ma'am." Lorne accepted the slip of paper and stood. Relief crept through him. The session wasn't as bad as he thought it'd be. Collecting himself, Lorne made his way toward the door. Foregoing the control panel, his natural ATA gene willed the door open. And, with a familiar hiss, freedom was within sight.

"Major Lorne?"

Lorne slightly turned, glancing over his shoulder to look at Kate. "Yes, Dr. Heightmeyer?"

"What's his name?"

He blinked. "Excuse me?"

"You never said his name."

"Baltier," Lorne paused. "He's the Head Protector."

And with that he left, hopeful never to return.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

\_A/N:\_ \*\*Wow, I really laid the angst on thick this chapter! With such a psychological trauma, I wanted to really accurately depict Lorne's struggle with the attack and the lack of closure he was able to receive as best I could. I don't want Lorne to be completely okay with what happened to him, and I definitely wanted the events of PXK-233 to have an effect of his character in this story. As such, don't be too surprised when he sees Dr. Kate Heightmeyer again in future chapters. (As a side note, I always thought it was so important to show the characters in the **\*\*Stargate: Atlantis\*\*** series struggling with their many missions and off-world encounters. The inclusion of a psychologist in the series, no matter how brief, was monumental as many shows don't depict such mental anguish without it becoming a point of weakness for the character.)\*\*

\*\*Anyway, now we're getting a little momentum going. I felt this chapter offered a bit of exposition behind my characterization of Lorne. I want him to be loyal and dependable, but not entirely dimwitted or two-dimensional like he is often portrayed. A lot of the background information and personality that I gave Lorne is a mixture of canon and ideas of my own creation. In the following chapters I will continue to add background (for both Lorne and John) so that you guys can get to know the characters as I know them in my head. That being said, comments and suggestions are always welcome.\*\*

\*\*Well, until next time! XOXO\*\*

\*\*(Please Favorite, Follow, and Review! Thanks!)\*\*

#### 4. Chapter 4

\*\*Title: Lost Among The Stars\*\*

\_\*\*Summary:\*\*\_ When Major Evan Lorne is attacked on a mission off-world, a series of events is put into motion that reveals the very secret John Sheppard had worked so hard to keep hidden. Eventual Sheppard/Lorne. Spoilers for "Coup d'etat" and "Doppleganger".

\_A/N:\_ **\*\*MINI RANT:\*\*** I find it so interesting that Lorne's first name has never been mentioned on screen, but was printed on his F-302 fighter-interceptor flight suit in "First Strike" - though it was later confirmed by **\*\*Stargate SG-1\*\*** executive producer Joseph Mallozzi that it was Evan. I have read a few fanfics that call him Marcus or Stephen and such, but I would have to assume that was before the reveal of Lorne's first name in canon. As you can tell, I have, of course, decided to keep the official name in my story. Major Evan Lorne just seems to have a better ring to it.\*\*

\*\*In this chapter, Lorne goes through the motions of a typical day in

Atlantis (emergencies and missions notwithstanding). It's a real slice-of-life kind of feel. I also added more secondary characters from canon to the story, such as Radek Zelenka and David Parrish.\*\*

\*\*On a side note, I just wanted to thank you all again for your reviews, I really enjoy reading them. They really inspire me to keep writing. Thank you again!\*\*

\_\*\*Characters:\*\*\_ Evan Lorne, John Sheppard, Rodney McKay, Ronon, Teyla, Elizabeth Weir, Sam Carter, Radek Zelenka, Jennifer Keller, and other minor characters and OCs.

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\_Warning:\_\*\* mentions of non-consensual rape.\*\*

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

It was a new day.

Lorne rose with his alarm. And, after a quick but warm shower, the Major headed to the cafeteria for a simple breakfast before tackling some overdue reports in his office. Not feeling particularly hungry, he only grabbed a plain bowl of oatmeal and some Pegasus-native fruit. Tentatively taking a bite, he was pleased to learn the fruit tasted much like an apple, even though it looked more like a mango.

After only being detained once to settle a dispute about training equipment, Lorne made it to his office with little interference. Well, honestly speaking, it wasn't only his office. He shared the space with John. But his commanding officer was rarely there, opting to do his own paperwork in the confines of his private quarters.

As such, Lorne was glad when he arrived to find the office empty. He wasn't sure if he could face people just yet. The memory of his attack was still too fresh in his mind and he didn't need the constant reminders or well-wishes that small talk usually provided.

He also particularly didn't want to see John. The Colonel always knew the right thing to say to get the Major to open up. It was one of the many reasons that Lorne felt so comfortable around John. Most of his past commanding officers were stiff and unapproachable. John, on the other hand, defied all previous experience. The reluctant leader was laid-back, sarcastic, and open to suggestion. He never had a hard time striking up a conversation. While this trait was admirable, it also made John very good at interrogation and manipulation. Lorne witnessed friend and foe alike being lulled into a false sense of self-confidence, admitting to secrets or personal tidbits around the Colonel. And, right now, that was the last thing Lorne wanted to do. Who knows what he might let slip?

Two hours later, after rereading and editing reports for the IOA, Lorne sighed and leaned back. His hand was beginning to cramp. Standing and stretching, he circled the perimeter of the room. Making a final circuit, Lorne couldn't help but yawn. He didn't suffer from any nightmares the night before but, then again, he didn't really sleep too well to begin with. But no one needed to know

that.

Figuring he just needed a cup of coffee, Lorne left the office and headed toward the labs. Radek's workspace had the best coffee maker in Atlantis. Even Rodney acknowledged the fact and was often found coming to "check up on his incompetent second in command. Oh, is that a fresh pot of coffee?" whenever he had the chance.

However, when he got there, the Major was surprised to find the lab empty. Assuming that Radek was in a meeting or exploring some sector of the city, Lorne helped himself the last cup of coffee before setting about to make a fresh pot for his friend.

Reaching down into the not-so-secret false drawer, Lorne pulled out the bag of fresh grounds. They were a special dark roast that the Czech scientist had shipped to him almost every Daedalus supply run. And, no matter how much people begged him, Radek would not reveal the source of the amazing coffee grounds. Lorne speculated that they were being sent by one of his many siblings.

As Lorne went to open it, he spied a note attached to the front. It was addressed to him. Lorne smiled when he recognized the Czech's handwriting. The note was simple. It read, "Lorne, have as much coffee as you want, you deserve it. I should be back from my meeting by lunchtime. If you're available I want your expertise on some device translations and activations. If you help me I'll make you dinner."

Lorne grinned. Believe it or not, the Czech was a very good cook. Those who were able to partake in his culinary excellence vowed they had never tasted anything more delicious. One of his meals was definitely worth the hours of being a guinea pig.

Glancing at his watch, Lorne made his decision to stay until his friend returned. He put the note aside and picked up his abandoned mug of coffee. Glancing around the workspace he spotted an Ancient device he'd never seen before. Assuming it to be the device Radek mentioned in the note, he walked over to examine it. Standing at a safe distance, taking care not to touch it or think any 'on-like' thoughts, the Major began to read over some of the symbols. Humming to himself, he took a sip of his hot beverage before moving over to read the handwritten notations about the device. He was so immersed in reading Radek's theories that he didn't hear the door hiss open.

"Major Lorne? What are you doing in here?"

Lorne glanced up from the notebook to spy Rodney enter the room. "Hey," he gave a small smile in greeting, "I'm just waiting for Radek."

The scientist sniffed. "Whatever for?"

"He wants to borrow my gene for a while," the soldier shrugged.

Rodney opened his mouth to ask another question but was interrupted when John bounded into the lab. "Hey, Rodney! Were you just pulling my leg before, or did you really find a machine that can convert someone's thoughts into a solid object?"



"Of course I was joking. Honestly, the very idea is absurd. It's impossible! You can't make something from nothing."

"But you do it all the time!"

Lorne snorted, hardly able to contain his mirth at the two before him. John and Rodney turned their attention to the Major. The former slightly surprised to see him there, while the latter simply glared.

John grinned. "Lorne! Good to see you out of the infirmary."

"Good to be out, sir."

"You here for the coffee?" He nodded to the mug in the Major's hand.

Rodney shook his head and answered for him. "No, Zelenka wants to use his ATA gene."

"And you came willingly?" John asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, in exchange for my good genes, he did promise to cook me dinner."

Rodney frowned, his brow scrunched up in confusion. "Zelenka cooks?"

"Yes, he does," a new voice responded. The group turned around to witness Radek enter his workspace. "And you should know that Rodney. I have invited you to dinner many times."

Rodney folded his arms, shaking his head in disbelief. "Really? When?"

"Last night," the Czech scientist deadpanned.

John barked a quick laugh while Rodney looked put out. "Oh."

Radek shook his head. Placing his personal tablet on a stool, he announced, "Now, if you're here for coffee, please take some and get out. I have important work to do."

"Sure thing, doc!" John said as he beelined toward the fresh pot Lorne made. Topping off his cup with a generous amount of sugar, John waved and followed Rodney out of the lab.

Once they were alone, Lorne turned to his friend. "Did you really invite McKay to dinner last night?"

Radek snorted. "Of course not. He would eat all my food."

Lorne chuckled. Putting aside his mug, he asked, "So what do you need me to do, doc?"

The two labored for several hours. Miraculously, neither man was called away to handle any emergencies, so they were able to work undisturbed. As such, they forwent eating lunch knowing full well that their dinner would be filling enough. Radek, with Lorne's help,

was eventually able to determine the purpose of the device. It was a clock. When voice activated it could tell someone the current time of any planet in its database. While it wasn't exactly what they were hoping for - Radek thought it to be a translator while Lorne hoped it to be a weapon - they chalked up the experiment to a success. After all, nothing exploded.

Turning off all the lights, Radek and Lorne left the lab by early evening. They swung by Lorne's office to pick up some paperwork before continuing to Radek's private quarters. While the Czech scientist busied himself with making dinner, the Major settled down at the kitchen table to finish the reports he had neglected earlier.

Just as Lorne signed the last form, the door chimed. Radek went over to admit Dr. David Parrish and Lieutenant Laura Cadman inside. Smiling, Lorne accepted the hug from the female soldier while he made due with a hearty handshake from the botanist.

"I invited them," Radek explained. "I hope you don't mind."

"The more, the merrier," the Major grinned.

The four settled down into comfortable conversations about the goings-on around Atlantis. While they briefly asked Lorne about the events that happened on PTK-233, he was able to deflect most of the questions and answer as vaguely as possible. He laughed off the attack as best he could. But his friends could tell he just didn't want to talk about it. And so, respecting his wishes, they changed the topic. David excitedly told him about some new plant discoveries he made on the mainland that had properties to cure some forms of benign tumors. Laura was eager to discuss a new high velocity rocket that the engineering team built that was designed to take down a Wraith dart in one shot.

Eventually dinner was served. The food was delicious and the company enjoyable.

It was a nice, quiet evening until Rodney showed up. The balding scientist tried making excuses about needing Radek to check his calculations but they all knew he was just nosing about in an attempt to coerce an invitation to dinner.

"I know you need my help, Rodney," Radek sighed. "But can't it wait until tomorrow?"

Rodney sneered. "I don't need your help!"

"Then why are you even asking?"

Laura giggled while David and Lorne shared an amused look.

Finally noticing that the dinner party had grown, the scientist huffed. "Cadman? Parrish? What are you doing here?"

"We were invited," Laura slyly spoke.

"Yes, well, I-"

"Rodney?"

He turned back to face Radek. "Hmm?"

"See you tomorrow," the Czech said before promptly closing the door in his superior's face.

It wasn't before they heard a squawk of indignation and the sound of stomping feet through the door that the group of friends burst into a fit of laughter.

"Did you see his face!"

"Like he'd ever admit he needs your help!"

"Absolutely childish!"

Radek's shoulders shook with mirth. "Oh, my." He whipped away a tear. "That was worth all the trouble I'll be getting in the morning."

They continued to make jokes at Rodney's expense while they helped clear the table and wash the dishes. Radek packed up the extra food into containers for each person to take with them. While Laura and David left, Lorne picked up his finished paperwork and thanked Radek a second time.

"Thanks for dinner, doc," he smiled. "I really needed it."

Knowing the Major was referring to more than just the food, the scientist nodded. "Anytime, my friend."

And so, sharing a final pat on the back, Lorne left the room and headed down the corridor toward the nearest transporter. Hitting the desired button, he was instantly taken to the other side of the tower. A few minutes later he found himself in front of John's door. And, ringing the bell, he waited.

The door easily slide open, revealing the relaxed Colonel. "Lorne?"

"Sir," he nodded.

"Come on in," his commanding officer said, moving aside to let him in.

The door hissed closed behind them.

"I have some paperwork you should look over before tomorrow's meeting with Dr. Weir. I filled out all the appropriate forms," he passed over the stack of papers to John. "You just need to sign them, sir."

"Oh, I could kiss you!" John exclaimed as he went to put the paperwork on his already overcrowded desk.

Luckily the Colonel's back was turned or he would have witnessed the deep blush that sprouted on Lorne's cheeks. The very thought of kissing the handsome soldier made the Major tingly. He had suffered for nearly a year with a crush on John. And for the man to suggest making out, even in jest, was almost too much for Lorne.

Attempting to compose himself, Lorne retorted, "If you insist, sir. But people will talk."

John snorted. "People do little else."

"Yes, sir. Good night, sir."

"G'night, Lorne."

Entering the hallway the Major almost ran into a very flustered Rodney. The scientist looked haggard and overworked. Lorne didn't notice it before, but then again he had been too busy trying not to laugh. Feeling sorry for the man, Lorne gave Rodney his leftovers. "Next time," he advised, "just ask."

Rodney gapped. "I- well, you seeâ€|" he sputtered.

"You're welcome," the Major smirked before strutting down the corridor and round the corner until he arrived at his own private quarters.

Locking the door behind him, Lorne slumped over to his dresser and picked out a worn pair of sweatpants and t-shirt to wear to bed. After changing out of the BDUs, he brushed his teeth and washed his face. He stumbled out of the bathroom and turned off the lights. Collapsing into his bed, exhaustion hit him full force. It had been a long day.

Lorne settled down in his bed, snuggling into the warm covers. Taking out his earpiece he turned it to full volume and placed it on his nightstand. He prayed he wouldn't be needed until the morning.

Soon he was fast asleep.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

"\_You're different from the othersâ€|\_"

Lorne woke with a gasp.

The Major shivered. He was wet and cold. Why was he wet? Blinking away the foggiest of sleep, Lorne looked about. He wasn't in his room. No, he was on a balcony overlooking the grand spires of Atlantis. How did he get outside?

A harsh wind whipped at his short hair, blowing rain into his face.

Lorne breathed in shakily. He glanced down at his watch. Three hours had passed. Three short hours since he had fallen asleep in his room. Panic coiled in his gut. What had happened? Was he drugged again? No, impossible. He would have remembered.

He grimaced. There was only one other explanation: he had started sleepwalking again. Lorne sighed. He hadn't sleepwalked since he was ten-years-old. It stopped shortly after the death of his father.

Lorne didn't remember what he had been dreaming about. Though when

sleepwalking was involved he never did. It must have been a nightmare, he deduced. Why else would he have suddenly started wandering about in his sleep again?

The Major shook his head, clearing the water from his eyes. Tears or rain, he didn't really know. Nor did it really matter.

He'd better go see Kate. He promised to visit her if he had any nightmares or flashbacks. Maybe, if he asked, she could get Jennifer to prescribe him some sleeping pills.

Moving carefully, as not to slip of the wet surface in his bare feet, Lorne exited the balcony.

Collecting his bearings, Lorne was surprised to notice that he was on the East Pier. Without using a transporter, it would have taken him at least an hour to walk to the balcony he woke up on. Violently shivering, he wrapped his arms around his wet torso and shuffled down Atlantis' long corridor. It was still late at night and the hallways were empty. At any other time Lorne would have been concerned by the lack of night patrol. But now, he didn't mind.

Eventually finding a transporter, Lorne stepped in. The wetness on his face was back. Definitely tears. Sniffing, and scrubbing at his face, he stepped out on his appointed floor. Not bothering to look around, he started to make his way back to his quarters.

Then a bang suddenly sounded behind him. Lorne quickly spun around, his hand flying to his thigh in search of this firearm. Of course, it wasn't there. Heart pounding and eyes wide, Lorne looked for the source of the noise.

"H-hello?" He winced, his voice sounded raw and breathy.

The Major waited. And, when no one responded and the noise echoed back into silence, Lorne relaxed and continued on his way. Once in his room he quickly stripped down and hopped into the shower. The warm water rolled off his back, down his legs, and curled around his toes. Grabbing a washcloth, Lorne roughly scrubbed his neck and chest, trying to wipe away any memories that tried to force their way to the surface.

Wrinkled and red skinned, the Major finally redressed himself in dry clothing. Knowing Kate wouldn't be up for several more hours, Lorne settle back into his bed.

But sleep refused to come. The blankets felt too heavy on his waist. The darkness was suffocating. The slight breeze felt like breathe on his exposed cheek. The rustle of fabric on his skin felt like wandering fingers.

So he just lay there, staring at the ceiling until the sun came up.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

"Sleepwalking? Are you sure?"

"It hasn't happened in years, but I recognize the feeling."

"You had these problems in the past?"

"Yeah, when I was a kid."

Kate nodded, making a note on her pad. "And you don't remember your dream?"

"No," Lorne sighed. "Though it's not surprising, I could never remember anything in the past."

"Well, despite your previous history, it's interesting that you would begin sleepwalking again. Usually sleepwalking is connected to sleep deprivation, stress, depression, and anxiety," Kate exemplined, "not traumatic events."

Lorne peered at her and pursed his lips. Noting his expression, the Doctor continued, "Not to say your experience on P XK-233 wasn't a factor... it's just probably not a symptom."

"If you say so."

"Now, have you been sleeping well? Or been experiencing any personal or work-related stress?"

"No, and I'm not depressed either," Lorne all but snapped.

Kate raised her eyebrows in slight apprehension. "No need to be defensive, Major."

He frowned. "I'm not defensive, just frustrated." Lorne roughly ran his hands through his hair and down his face.

The Doctor hummed, turning back to her notepad. "Now, I can have Dr. Keller prescribe you a mild sedative, possibly mixed with a muscle relaxant, to help you sleep."

"I would appreciate that, Dr. Heightmeyer."

She smiled, scratching out the medical request. "Sleeping pills can only do so much. I want you to come back if you continue sleepwalking. Sometimes medicine can aggravate an already present condition." Receiving a nod in confirmation, Kate continued, "Alright, now take this to the infirmary." She handed him a prescription form from her notepad. "Let's give it a try for three nights. If the pills don't work then we might have to try something else, including more counseling."

Lorne sighed heavily, "I understand."

"Off you go," she smiled, shooing him out of her office. "I hope I don't have to see you again for a long while."

The Major laughed. "That makes two of us!" he called over his shoulder.

Lorne swung by the control room on his way to the infirmary. He arrived just time time to see the Stargate shut down. There were no new arrivals on the platform so the Major had to assume that there had been an unscheduled check-in or that a team had just departed. Furrowing his brow in confusion, he addressed one of the Marines on

guard. "Unscheduled check-in?"

"Yes, sir," the Marine responded. "Colonel Sheppard reported in and requested backup to aid in a search and rescue."

"Did he lose McKay again?"

The soldier suppressed a smirk. "No, sir. The village they were visiting was abandoned. There was no sign of Wraith activity so they needed help locating the locals."

Lorne grunted, dismayed that he wasn't notified that a team was being put together. Usually he was called to aid John and his team. But, according to regulation, he wasn't supposed to be off-world whenever John was. It was his job as second in command to stay on Atlantis and oversee the military contingent. Emergencies were the only exception.

Lorne thanked the Marine before continuing on to see Jennifer. She prescribed him the proper drugs and sent him on his way. Lorne appreciated that she didn't ask too many questions.

He was able to drop off the pill bottle in his room before he was needed to give gun lecture and training to the newest batch of recruits. While everyone carried handguns, P-90s were their weapon of choice against the Wraith. And some of the soldiers were inexperienced with using P-90s. The semi-automatic machine gun was fairly light but had a severe kick-back. When he arrived at the firing range he was pleased to see everyone was in attendance. Lieutenant Abrams, a member of his own team, just finished handing out the safety gear and assigning everyone a partner for the duration of the exercise.

Two hours later Lorne dismissed the group. He felt confident that the new soldiers were now competent enough to use the powerful weapon. After seeing all the equipment was properly stowed away, the Major swung by the labs to grab Radek for lunch. The Czech scientist gladly went with him. They made small talk during their walk to the cafeteria. Radek was happy that Rodney was off-world and not bothering him. Lorne smiled at his friend while loading his tray with some fruit and an egg-salad sandwich.

Lorne was eventually called away to respond to a small fire that broke out in the lower levels. Luckily, the flames were easily put out. A cigarette butt was found to be the source of the blaze. Someone hadn't put it out properly and it had set some dirty rags on fire.

The Major reported the incident to Elizabeth over his headset. Cigarettes were banned on Atlantis while other substances, like beer, were tightly regulated. They couldn't have their personnel incapacitated or unhealthy while the Wraith lurked about. Elizabeth speculated the likelihood of contraband entering the city, possibly with other supplies from the Daedalus. She immediately tasked Lorne to investigate the matter.

And so, for the rest of the day, Lorne poured over inventory files in his office. David was able to pull him away for a brief dinner but in no time he was back. Lorne was frustrated. All the paperwork seemed to be in order. Lorne assumed that either someone had listed

contraband under different name or an individual simply had a stash from Earth that they were partaking in. After dinner Lorne decided to cover all his bases and sent a city-wide notice to all personnel, reminding them of certain banned items. He made it perfectly clear that if someone stepped forward about the fire they would not be punished.

Not a half hour later a squirrely looking female scientist knocked on his door. Lorne didn't recognize the woman, so he guessed her to be one of Rodney's newest recruits. Without so much as an introduction the scientist promptly began to apologize. She claimed ownership of the wayward cigarette. She was crying and blubbering, begging not to be sent back to Earth. Lorne was speechless. He finally collected himself and passed her a box of tissues and asked her to sit down and explain. The woman told him that she was trying to quit but she found a half smoked pack in her bag a few days ago. She meant to throw them out but Rodney got to her first. He had yelled at her for shoddy work, bringing her to tears - not an impossible, or even an uncommon, occurrence. In her stressed state she snuck out to smoke in the lower levels. The scientist claimed she she didn't mean to start a fire. In fact, she didn't even know what happened until she received Lorne's email. She couldn't express just how regretful she was.

Lorne, feeling sorry for the woman, immediately forgave her. The fire wasn't too big and had been easily put out. He promised not to send her back on the Daedalus. Her tears of shame quickly turned into tears of joy. Lorne asked for the remaining cigarettes and the scientist promptly handed them over. Thanking him again and again, the scientist left shortly after, the tissue box tucked underneath her arm.

Mystery solved.

Glad that it was an isolated event, Lorne sent his final report to Elizabeth.

Later that evening, long after the stars had come out, the Major finally made his way back to his private quarters. He was exhausted. Quickly changing, Lorne fell into bed. He dropped his earpiece on the side table. Reaching over, he grabbed the sleeping pills he had put there earlier. Dry swallowing two, Lorne rolled over until falling into a dreamless sleep.

\*\*~O~O~\*\*

A/N:\*\* Another chapter done! As I continue to write, the chapters seem to be getting longer and longer. As such, I have started to split them up, this chapter used to be almost double in length but then I chopped it in half to make it more manageable. \*\*

\*\*As you probably noticed, I focus a lot on Lorne's everyday life on Atlantis. I really wanted to exhibit some of his duties that he would encounter when not off-world or on missions, including some of the not-so-exciting responsibilities (such as paperwork).\*\*

\*\*I also wanted to establish a friend-base for Lorne, including characters such as Radek Zelenka, Laura Cadman, and David Parrish. It's safe to say that Lorne, a secondary character in the series, would be friends with other such secondary characters. Besides, all



of these characters all have at least one interaction on screen together, particularly Radek and Lorne. It's important that Lorne have a life outside his job - he has friends, he is his own person (I don't want him to be a cliché character in my story). These characters, along with a few of my OCs, will be sprinkled throughout my whole story. I want **\*\*Lost Among The Stars\*\*** to not only focus on Lorne and John, but to have a more slice-of-life feel to it.\*\*

**\*\*Anyway, I'll be sure to update soon! Favorite and review!**  
**XOXO\*\***

End  
file.